

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. In a network-based system, a computer-implemented method comprising:
  - presenting a page on a network site sponsored by a hosting entity;
  - offering as part of the page an option to view user-specific data, wherein the user-specific data is located at a network site owned by a third party that is independent from the hosting entity;
  - registering the particular user with the hosting entity;
  - whereupon activation of the option on the hosting entity's page by a particular user of the hosting entity, linking to the third party's network site;
  - enabling access to the third party's network site without registering the particular user with the third party; and
  - presenting, to the particular user, a new page at the third party's network site that incorporates the user-specific data.
2. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 1, wherein the linking comprises addressing a universal resource locator (URL) for the third party's network site.
3. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 1, wherein the linking comprises establishing a secure data connection between the hosting entity and the third party.

4. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 1, further comprising supplying a return universal resource locator (URL) to the third party's network site for use in returning to the hosting entity's network site.

5. A computer-implemented method as defined in Claim 1, wherein:  
the page on the network site sponsored by the hosting entity identifies the hosting entity;

the linking to the third party's network site does not expose this transfer to the particular user; and

the presenting, to the particular user, the new page at the third party's network site also identifies the hosting entity without identifying a network address of the third party's network site.

6. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 1, further comprising displaying a logo of the hosting entity on the new page at the third party's network site.

7. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 1, wherein the linking comprises addressing a universal resource locator (URL) associated with the third party's network site and sending an identity of the hosting entity to the third party so that the third party may identify the hosting entity in the new page.

8. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 1, wherein the linking comprises supplying, to the third party network site, page formatting information that is used

by the third party network site to present the new page, the page formatting information enabling an appearance of the new page that resembles the page presented by the hosting entity's network site.

9. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 1, wherein the linking comprises:

connecting to the third party's network site; and

uploading navigation information from the third party network site to the hosting entity network site that may be used by the particular user to navigate the user-specific data resident at the third party network site.

10. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 1, wherein:

the linking comprises addressing a universal resource locator (URL) associated with the third party's network site and sending a token identifying the particular user; and

using the token to locate the user-specific data for the particular user.

11. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 1, wherein presenting, to the particular user, the new page at the third party's network site that incorporates the user-specific data further comprises:

offering as part of the new page an option to activate an additional function selected from the group consisting of an embedded hyperlink, an executable code segment, and a pop-up dialog box; and

activating the additional function upon the activation of the option to activate the additional function.

12. A computer-readable media comprising computer-executable instructions for performing the method as recited in claim 1.

13. In a network-based system, a computer-implemented method comprising:  
presenting a page on a network site sponsored by a hosting entity to a particular user;  
requiring the particular user to logon with the hosting entity's network site;  
offering as part of the page an option to view user-specific data, wherein the user-specific data is located at a network site owned by a third party that is independent from the hosting entity;  
whereupon activation of the option on the hosting entity's page by the particular user of the hosting entity, linking to the third party's network site;  
enabling access to the third party's network site without logging on the particular user with the third party's network site; and  
presenting, to the particular user, a new page at the third party's network site that incorporates the user-specific data.

14. A computer-implemented method as defined in Claim 13, wherein:  
the page on the network site sponsored by the hosting entity identifies the hosting entity;  
the linking to the third party's network site does not expose this transfer to the particular user; and

the presenting, to the particular user, the new page at the third party's network site also identifies the hosting entity without identifying a network address of the third party's network site.

15. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 13, further comprising displaying a logo of the hosting entity on the new page at the third party's network site.

16. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 13, wherein the linking comprises addressing a universal resource locator (URL) associated with the third party's network site and sending an identity of the hosting entity to the third party so that the third party may identify the hosting entity in the new page.

17. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 13, wherein the linking comprises supplying, to the third party network site, page formatting information that is used by the third party network site to present the new page, the page formatting information enabling an appearance of the new page that resembles the page presented by the hosting entity's network site.

18. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 13, wherein the linking comprises:

connecting to the third party's network site; and

uploading navigation information from the third party network site to the hosting entity network site that may be used by the particular user to navigate the user-specific data resident at the third party network site.

19. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 13, wherein:

the linking comprises addressing a universal resource locator (URL) associated with the third party's network site and sending a token identifying the particular user; and

using the token to locate the user-specific data for the particular user.

20. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 13, wherein presenting, to the particular user, the new page at the third party's network site that incorporates the user-specific data further comprises:

offering as part of the new page an option to activate an additional function selected from the group consisting of an embedded hyperlink, an executable code segment, and a pop-up dialog box; and

activating the additional function upon the activation of the option to activate the additional function.

21. A computer-readable media comprising computer-executable instructions for performing the method as recited in claim 13.

22. In a network-based system, a computer-implemented method comprising:

presenting a page on a network site sponsored by a hosting entity;

enabling users to register with the hosting entity in order to access information on the network site;

offering as part of the page an option to view user-specific data wherein the user-specific data is located at a network site owned by a third party that is independent from the hosting entity; and

whereupon activation of the option on the hosting entity's page by a particular user of the hosting entity, linking to the third party's network site without requiring the particular user to first register with the third party and presenting a new page at the third party's network site.

23. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 22, wherein the new page does not identify a network address associated with the third party's network site.

24. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 22, wherein the presenting a new page at the third party's network site further comprises:

offering as part of the new page an option to activate an additional function selected from the group consisting of an embedded hyperlink, an executable code segment, and a pop-up dialog box; and

activating the additional function upon the activation of the option to activate the additional function.

25. In a network-based system, a computer-implemented method comprising:  
presenting a page on a network site sponsored by a hosting entity;

prompting users to log on to the network site prior to permitting access to information on the network site;

offering as part of the page an option to view user-specific data wherein the user-specific data is located at a network site owned by a third party that is independent from the hosting entity; and

whereupon activation of the option on the hosting entity's page by a particular user of the hosting entity, linking to the third party's network site without requiring the particular user to log on to the third party's network site and presenting a new page at the third party's network site that incorporates the user-specific data.

26. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 25, wherein the new page does not identify a network address associated with the third party's network site.

27. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 25, further comprising sending a token identifying the particular user to the third party.



28. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 25, further comprising:  
forming a token identifying the particular user;  
encrypting the token using a public key of the third party; and  
sending the token to the third party.

29. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 25, wherein the linking to the third party's network site without requiring the particular user to log on to the third party's network site further comprises:

the hosting network site and the third party's network site performing a security exchange to authenticate one another; and

employing encryption/decryption processes to protect against eavesdroppers and tampering third parties.

30. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 29, wherein the security exchange is a cryptographic key exchange or a certificate exchange.

31. A computer-implemented method as recited in claim 25, wherein the linking to the third party's network site further comprises:

offering on the new page at the third party's network site an option to activate an additional function selected from the group consisting of an embedded hyperlink, an executable code segment, and a pop-up dialog box; and

activating the additional function upon the activation of the option to activate the additional function.

32. A computer-readable media comprising computer-executable instructions for performing the method as recited in claim 25.

33. An electronic system for a network, comprising:

a network server to support a network site sponsored by a hosting entity, the server presenting a page for the hosting entity's network site that offers an option to view user-specific data, wherein the user-specific data is located at a third party that is independent from the hosting entity;

a server located at the third party to store the user-specific data; and

whereupon activation of the option on the hosting entity's page by a particular user of the hosting entity, the network server being configured to link to the third party's server by establishing a secure data connection between the hosting entity and the third party.

34. An electronic system as recited in claim 33, wherein the link to the third party's server does not expose this transfer to the particular user.

35. An electronic system as recited in claim 33, wherein the third party's server is a network server that supports pages, the third party's server being configured to present, to the particular user, a new page that incorporates the user-specific data, the new page identifying the hosting entity and veiling the third party's identity to lead the particular user

to believe that the user-specific data is provided by the hosting entity rather than the third party.

36. An electronic system as recited in claim 33, wherein the third party's server supplies navigation data to the hosting entity network server that may be used by the particular user to navigate the user-specific data resident on the third party's server

37. An electronic system as recited in claim 33, wherein the hosting entity's network server links to the third party server by addressing a universal resource locator (URL) for the third party's network site.

38. An electronic system as recited in claim 33, wherein the hosting entity's network server sends a token identifying the particular user to the third party's server for use in locating the user-specific data for the particular user.

39. A program for an electronic system, the program being embodied on a computer-readable medium and executed on a server at a hosting entity, the program comprising:

a code segment that, upon execution, renders a page sponsored by the hosting entity, the page containing an option to view data specific to a particular user that is located at a remote server owned by a third party that is independent from the hosting entity;

a code segment that, upon execution, formulates a token comprising at least one of the identity of the particular user, a data, an expiration date, and an identity of the hosting entity;

a code segment that, upon execution, encrypts the token;

a code segment that, upon execution, passes the encrypted token to the remote server; and

a code segment, responsive to activation of the option by the particular user, that, upon execution, transfers control to the remote server without exposing the transfer to the particular user and to pass an identity of the particular user to the remote server to enable the remote server to present the data specific to the particular user.

40. A program as recited in claim 39, wherein:

the remote server is a network server; and

the program further comprises a code segment that, upon execution, activates a universal resource locator (URL) of the remote network server to transfer control to the remote network server.

41. A program as recited in claim 39, wherein the code segment that, upon execution, enables the remote server to present the data specific to the particular user enables the remote server to:

present an option to activate an additional function selected from the group consisting of an embedded hyperlink, an executable code segment, and a pop-up dialog box; and

activate the additional function upon the activation of the option to activate the additional function.

42. A program as recited in claim 39, wherein the code that, upon execution, transfers control to the remote server does not expose the transfer to the particular user.

43. A program for an electronic system, the program being embodied on a computer-readable medium and executed on a server at a hosting entity, the program comprising:

a code segment that, upon execution, renders a first page sponsored by the hosting entity, the first page containing an option to view data specific to a particular user that is submitted to a third party by a fourth party, the data specific to the particular user electronic being located at a remote server owned by the third party that is independent from the hosting entity;

a code segment, responsive to activation of the option by the particular user, that, upon execution, establishes a secure data connection between the hosting entity and the third party at the remote server and to obtain the data specific to the particular user; and

a code segment that, upon execution, renders a second page that presents the data specific to the particular user.

44. The program as defined in Claim 43, wherein the second page does not present a network address associated with the remote server and thereby appears as if the hosting entity provided the data specific to the particular user.

45. A program for an electronic system, the program being embodied on a computer-readable medium and executed on a server that has access to electronic user specific data, comprising:

a code segment that, upon execution, receives a request from a hosting entity to review the electronic user specific data belonging to a particular user of the hosting entity, the request containing indicia that identifies the hosting entity and an identity of the particular user;

a code segment that, upon execution, establishes a secure connection with both the particular user and a hosting entity from which to retrieve the electronic user specific data belonging to the particular user; and

a code segment that, upon execution, presents the electronic user specific data.

46. The program as defined in Claim 45, wherein the code segment that, upon execution, presents the electronic user specific data does so without presenting a network address so as to lead the particular user to believe that the user interface is sponsored by the hosting entity.